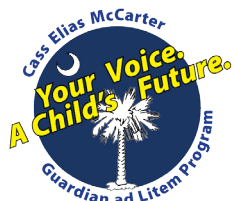


I am for the child™



Charles Weaver
Darlington County Volunteer

“A volunteer Guardian ad Litem is one person who can make a difference. It confirms that one person can make a difference in our community.”



I am for the Child because I can make a difference. I can help. It may not always be my desired outcome but I can make a positive difference. The minute I see the kids for the first time, they become my kids. No longer those kids – these are my kids.

I became interested in working with children when I was a young officer in the Air Force. I was working with kids at an alternative school. I took an 8 year old boy under my wing. While working with him one day, he told me he wanted to kill someone. It was shocking. After speaking to him about it, I understood his rationale about killing someone. He felt that if he killed someone, he would go to jail and come back feared by his peers. It was a sense of respect. He came from a good, single parent home but he had no male role models in his life.

That little boy has always stuck in my mind and made me want to reach out and help children. When I moved to South Carolina, I started working with foster children at my church. My wife and I babysat during the trainings for foster parents. Then, on my job, one of my co-workers mentioned that she was a volunteer Guardian ad Litem. She gave me the contact information for the local office. This gave me the opportunity to work even more with these foster kids that I saw 3-4 times a year at church.

I didn't know a lot about the program until I came to the office for training. I knew it was an opportunity to work with the foster kids and give them someone to look up to. We often talk about the issues and problems of the world but we don't do anything about it. A volunteer Guardian ad Litem is one person who can make a difference. It confirms that one person can make a difference in our community.

Being an African American male in the volunteer Guardian ad Litem program, I feel that I can be a catalyst to bring other males to the program. We need males. A lot of the children are from female only households and these kids need a positive male role model. I remember a child who asked me if black males work. This child went to school and church – his bus driver, his teacher, his minister were all female. The only African American males he saw were on the street. He didn't know the difference. This has stuck in my mind. African American males can communicate with these kids. We can give them a male role model who they can identify with and have a much better experience.

I feel that I am being a role model to these kids. I am serving as the missing link by being a positive male role model in these children's lives. My favorite part of being a volunteer Guardian ad Litem is going to see the kids. These kids light up when I walk in. They come and jump in my lap. They want you to stay and talk to them and never leave.

You can make a difference. You can't make the excuse that you don't have time or you can't do it because you can. One person can make a difference as a volunteer Guardian ad Litem. This job is rewarding. It is emotional at times but you are needed and you are wanted. You can make a real difference in someone's life that will last a lifetime.

